

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2-15 stand canceled.

The amendment leaves claims 1, 16-26 pending.

Claim 1 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over Boyd et al U.S. Patent

5 Application Publication No. 2004/0231975. Claim 1 has been amended to more particularly distinguish over the prior art, and consideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Amended claim 1 requires that the support structure comprise a base (10, Fig. 4) attached to a component (64, e.g. transom) of a marine vessel and protruding outwardly therefrom, and
10 that the conductive element (42) is supported by the base (10) and has a first face facing outwardly (upper face), and a second face (46) facing inwardly (downwardly in Fig. 4), and that the conductor (30) be connected to the second face (46).

Boyd et al '475 discloses an electrode system 10 applied to front and back surfaces 20a and 20b of a panel 20 representing the surface of a ship, page 2, paragraph 21, wherein
15 alternating sets of electrodes 10a and 10b are made from conductive material, preferably a conductive coating, and further preferably the conductive coating composition designated as UNISHIELD®, page 2, paragraphs 24, 25. Panel 20 is made of an electrically non-conductive material, page 2, paragraph 28, and the sets of electrodes 10a and 10b can be embedded in the same or separate, spaced layers of an electrically non-conductive material or applied to the same
20 surface of an electrically non-conductive material as long as the sets of electrodes 10a and 10b are insulated from each other by the electrically non-conductive material, with an example being given that the sets of electrodes 10a and 10b can be embedded in the outer layer of a gel coat of a fiber reinforced plastic or composite, or embedded in a polymer matrix of an outer layer of a ship, vessel or any aquatic structure, paragraph 28, pages 2-3. It is respectfully submitted that
25 Boyd et al '475 does not teach nor suggest the combination now defined in amended claim 1, including the conductive element (42) of a matrix material and conductive particles in combination with the defined base and conductor. Consideration and allowance of amended claim 1 is respectfully requested.

Claim 16 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above.
30 Furthermore, claim 16 defines a sub-combination requiring that the base (10) have an outer periphery and a cavity (20) recessed inwardly therefrom, the cavity having an outer reach at the

outer periphery of the base, the cavity having an inner reach spaced inwardly of the outer reach, the conductive element (42) being supported in the cavity (20) outwardly of the inner reach.

Claim 17 depends from claim 16 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 17 defines a sub-combination requiring a sealing encapsulant in the cavity 5 (page 8, line 9) in contact with the conductive element (42) and blocking moisture from contacting the conductor (30).

Claim 18 depends from claim 17 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 18 defines a sub-combination requiring that the sealing encapsulant be between the conductive element (42) and the inner reach of the cavity.

10 Claim 19 depends from claim 18 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 19 defines a sub-combination requiring that the conductive element (42) be at the outer reach of the cavity (20).

Claim 20 depends from claim 18 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 20 defines a sub-combination requiring a dam (50) in the cavity (20) 15 isolating the connection of the conductor (30) and the second face (46) of the conductive element (42) from the encapsulant.

Claim 21 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 21 defines a sub-combination requiring that the conductor (30) engage the second face (46) of the conductive element (42) with a spring loaded contact (44, 48).

20 Claim 22 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 22 defines a sub-combination requiring that the base (10) have a hole receiving the conductor (30) therethrough for connection to the second face (46) of the conductive element (42).

Claim 23 depends from claim 22 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. 25 Furthermore, claim 23 defines a sub-combination requiring that the component (64) of the marine vessel have a second hole receiving the conductor (30) therethrough such that the conductor (30) extends through each of the component (64) of the marine vessel and the base (10) through the respective noted holes.

Claim 24 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. 30 Furthermore, claim 24 defines a sub-combination requiring that the base (10) have an outer periphery and a cavity (20) recessed inwardly therefrom, the cavity (20) having an outer reach at

the outer periphery of the base (10), the cavity (20) having an inner reach spaced inwardly of the outer reach, the conductive element (42) being supported in the cavity (20) outwardly of the inner reach, the base (10) having a first hole communicating with the cavity (20) and receiving the conductor (30) extending through the first hole into the cavity (20) for connection to the second face of the conductive element (42), the component (64) of the marine vessel having a second hole aligned with the first hole and receiving the conductor (30) therethrough, such that the conductor (30) extends through each of the first and second aligned holes into the cavity (20).

5 Claim 25 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 25 defines a sub-combination requiring that each of the base (10) and the 10 conductive element (42) is a polymer material.

Claim 26 depends from claim 1 and is believed allowable for the reasons noted above. Furthermore, claim 26 defines a sub-combination requiring that the component of the marine vessel be a transom (64) of the marine vessel.

It is believed that this application is in condition for allowance with claims 1, 16-26, and 15 such action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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